(c) This project is likely to be ready for service by end of the current financial year.

Indian officials for Iraq polls

†106. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to depute Indian officials in Iraq to conduct polls there;

(b) if so, the reasons behind such a decision; and

(c) the source from where Government received a request to send Indian officials to Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The UN Electoral Assistance Division for Iraq, based in Amman, has made the request through our Embassy in Baghdad.

Ban on wearing turban in France

107. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is fact that Government of France had imposed a ban on the wearing of turban and other religious symbols for Sikhs residing in that country;

(b) If so, the details thereof;

(c) Whether it is also a fact that a Sikh delegation from France had recently met him and the Prime Minister seeking help from Government of India in this regard;

(d) If so, whether the matter has been taken up with the Government of France; and

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(e) If so, what is the response in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The French Law bans all ostentatious religious symbols in French Public Schools without prejudice to any particular religion.

(c) and (d) Prime Minister has received representations regarding this issue. The Prime Minister and the Minister of External Affairs have taken it up with the French government suitably.

(e) The French Government have agreed to explore a pragmatic solution to the issue within their legal framework.

Proposal from Pakistan to solve Kashmir Problem

108. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal from the Government of Pakistan for the solution of Kashmir problem;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) No, sir. Pakistan has only made procedural suggestions for discussing the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) and (c) It has been pointed out to the Government of Pakistan that discussions on Jammu and Kashmir are already agreed at the level of Foreign Secretaries, in the framework of the Composite Dialogue.

Prime Minister's Foreign Visit

†109. SMT. SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister had recently visited USA, Britain etc.;

(b) the matters discussed during the visit;

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.